



SOUTH WILTS GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS (ACADEMY)

SCHOOL AIMS

South Wilts is a progressive grammar school for girls, which aims to maintain high academic standards and cultural achievement within a caring environment. We seek to encourage responsibility and personal fulfilment so that students attain their maximum potential. The School is dynamic and works with the community to prepare its students for life-long learning and adult independence.

PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS POLICY

1. GENERAL

South Wilts Grammar Schools recognises the importance of assessment through public examinations at Key Stages 3, 4 and 5 which provide students with academic qualifications. Students are given the opportunity to demonstrate the highest achievement of which they are capable and competent: administration helps them to achieve their best. South Wilts Grammar School further recognise the need to maintain the highest standards in administering public examinations in accordance with the requirements of the Department for Education and the Joint Council for Qualifications and Examinations Boards (JCQ).

The implementation of this policy will be taken account of in strategic planning and routine administration discussed in meetings of the Leadership Team, of Head of Departments and of the full staff.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES

Senior Management

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the school as an examination centre. The Headteacher will advise on appeals and re-marks, and takes responsibility for reporting all suspicions or actual incidents of malpractice to the Exam Boards.

At fixed points the Headteacher, Deputy Head and the Examinations Officer process results for later statistical returns. The Headteacher reports on the quality of results to Governors, Leadership Team and the Staff during departmental reviews with Heads of Departments. The Headteacher is responsible for press releases.

Heads of Departments/ Heads of Key Stage

Heads of Departments are responsible for informing the Examinations Officer of any syllabus and qualification changes, checking provisional statements of entry for all Examinations, ensuring coursework deadlines are met and that the coursework meets the criteria, completing coursework mark and estimated grade sheets, and liaising with the Examinations Officer over the despatch of coursework for moderation/markings as well as in other routine matters. They and Heads of Key Stage are responsible for guidance and pastoral oversight of students who are unsure about examination entries or where alteration of the initial entry is made.

Examinations Officer

Has responsibility for:

- Processing of entries, results and certificates for all public examinations;
- Communication with SWGS candidates, parents and members of staff, and with BWS Examinations Officer and members of staff;

- Management of enquiries about Results, Appeals and Special Considerations;
- Liaison with SENCO about candidates' access arrangements / special considerations. Completion of all relevant paperwork for the Exam Boards;
- Liaison with carrier collection / postage of scripts and coursework;
- Processing invoices for receipts and payments, in collaboration with Finance Department;
- Arranging venues;
- Hiring, training and timetabling of invigilators;
- Attempting to contact candidates absent from an examination sitting;
- Preparation of statistical returns in liaison with the SLT.

Disability Discrimination Act

All exam centre staff must ensure that they meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), extended in 2005, and the Disability Equality Duty (DED), introduced in 2006.

The main provisions of the Act give protection to disabled people in the areas of employment and education.

'A person has a disability for the purposes of the DDA if s/he has a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on her/his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The centre will meet the requirements of the DDA by ensuring that the Examinations centre is accessible and improving candidate experience. This is the responsibility of the Head of centre, Examinations Officer and SENCo.

Access arrangements

The SENCo will inform subject teachers of candidates with special educational needs who are embarking on a course leading to an exam, including any special access arrangements that individual candidates can be granted during the course and in the exam.

A candidate's access arrangements requirement is determined by the SENCo and a qualified specialist teacher named by the School. It is the School's policy to test all candidates with a history of need and a history of provision of access arrangements at least one month prior to Examinations. This testing is to inform exam office staff on the most appropriate adjustments to exam conditions for the candidates in question.

All candidates will be tested by the School's specialist teacher even if they already have an external report produced by an educational psychologist or a specialist teacher from a previous school. The recommendations made in the new report will supersede previous arrangements or recommendations if appropriate.

Making access arrangements for candidates to take Examinations is the responsibility of both the SENCo and Examinations Officer. Submitting completed access arrangement applications to the awarding bodies is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer. Rooming for access arrangement candidates will be arranged by the SENCo with the Examinations Officer. Invigilation and support for access arrangement candidates will be organised by the Examinations Officer and the SENCo.

Invigilators

Invigilators, organised and supervised by the Examinations Officer, are drawn from parents, and other known individuals, and are paid at rates agreed with the Finance Department. They collect materials for the exam sitting, start, supervise and end exam sessions and return the material to the Examinations Officer.

Securing the necessary Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance for invigilators is the responsibility of the centre administration.

Teachers

Teachers check candidates' entry details and pass lists via Heads of Department to the Examinations Officer. Teachers may not read exam papers or remove them from the exam room before the end of an exam, nor offer advice on questions.

Candidates

Candidates must confirm their Statements of Entry and have them signed by their parents. They must understand their coursework regulations and sign a declaration that authenticates their coursework as their own.

During an exam candidates must abide by the rules and regulations laid down by the JCQ. They must only have with them the equipment required for that exam. All other belongings must be left outside the room and the centre accepts no liability for their loss or damage. If a candidate requires special consideration for any reason for an exam it is the candidate's responsibility to alert the centre to that effect. The candidate must support any such claim with appropriate evidence within five days of the exam.

3. FINANCE

Fees charged by the examination boards are met by the School, with the following exceptions which are paid by the candidates at the time of requesting entry:

- Fees for re-sit entries and any associated late entry fees;
- Fees for students whose attendance is below 85% and where there is no validated reason;
- Fees for subjects not on the curriculum and for which SWGS candidates are prepared independently. Additionally, an administration fee and an invigilation fee may be charged for these independent entries.

Any charges made by the examinations boards for Enquiries about Results and for photocopies or original scripts, are passed on to candidates, unless the request is from a subject teacher where the school will meet the expense.

Amendment of entries which incur a financial penalty from the Examination Board will be charged to subjects if they arise from that subject's error or omission. Changes made by the proper procedures will be met by the school.

If a candidate withdraws from an exam at her request after the deadline for entry has passed, or fails to submit sufficient coursework so that a teacher feels unable to enter her, or fails to sit an exam without producing a medical certificate then the parents will be asked to refund the fees paid by the school. This undertaking is confirmed electronically by students and parents through the school's VLE at the time of checking statements of entry.

When parents disagree with the school's decision regarding the entry of a student they may choose to enter the student separately. Under these circumstances parents will be asked to pay for the entry.

At Post -16

Entries are made by the Home School (BWS or SWGS) at which the student is on roll. Where a student is taught at the other School, instructions from the Teaching School are passed to the Home School, which will arrange for the relevant examination entries to be made.

Payment of fees is the responsibility of the Home School. The Home School in turn invoices the Teaching School for entry fees relevant to subjects taught to students of the Home School. Any late entry fees are treated in the same way.

Entries at SWGS can be made for private or external candidates, i.e. not on the School roll. These entries are paid for by the candidates, along with an administration charge and invigilation fees at a rate agreed by Finance Department.

4. ENTRIES

At Key Stage 4 and Post-16

All students should be entitled to and enabled to achieve a number of entries for qualifications from an external awarding body. If a student's entry in a subject is to be withdrawn there must be an initial concern form completed by the subject teacher in consultation with the subject leader. The student, parent/carers, the head of key stage, the subject leader, subject teacher and (if necessary careers adviser) should also be consulted before a final decision is made. All students will be monitored carefully throughout their time at school, and coursework and attitude notified to the head of key stage using Cause for Concern forms as soon as they arise.

At Post-16

It is expected that AS courses will be completed during Year 12. The School's policy on re-sits will be communicated to students and parents/carers at the start of Year 12. Re-sit decisions are a student's responsibility with advice available from subject teachers, subject leaders and the Head of Sixth Form.

All Levels

When there are changes to course structures following the implementation of new government policies, SWGS procedures concerning payment for entries may be amended to reflect those changes.

5. APPEALS

Appeals against Internal Assessments / controlled assessments

The School is committed to ensuring that whenever staff assess students' work for external qualification, this is done fairly, consistently and in accordance with the specification for the qualification concerned. Assessments should be conducted by staff who have appropriate knowledge, understanding and skills. Students' work should be produced and authenticated according to the requirements of the examination board.

The JCQ regulations state that:

“the work which you submit for assessment must be your own”.
“you must not copy from someone else or allow another candidate to copy from you”.

Any suspicions of plagiarism must be investigated by the subject teacher along with the head of department. The examinations officer needs to be informed of any incidents of malpractice.

Where a set of work is divided between staff, consistency should be assured by internal moderation and standardisation. If students believe this may not have happened in relation to their work they may make use of this appeals procedure. Note that appeals may only be made against the process that led to the assessment and not against the mark or grade.

The procedure to be followed is:

The appeal should be addressed in writing to the SWGS Examinations Officer stating the details of the complaint and the reason for the appeal.

A copy of any such communication must then be made available to the relevant Head of Department/Teacher concerned within forty eight hours of receipt. Any response to this should then be made in writing to the Examinations Officer who must ensure that a copy is passed to the candidate within another forty-eight hours.

Should the candidate bringing the appeal be dissatisfied with the response, she may request a personal hearing in writing to the Examinations Officer. This must take place within five working days of the receipt of the request.

The hearing will be chaired by the Examinations Officer with two other individuals who have not previously been involved with the appeal. One will be a member of the Leadership Team and one a SWGS Governor. The Head of Department/Teacher concerned and the candidate's parents/guardians will be invited to attend.

A written record of the appeal will be made, including the outcome of an appeal and the reasons for the outcome. The candidate must receive a copy within forty eight hours. The decision will be final.

The Examinations Officer should inform the Awarding Body if there is any change to an internally assessed mark as a result of an appeal. Careful consideration must be given to the dates and timing of an appeal, taking into account the results date and subsequent issue of certificates, for the relevant examination series.

After work has been assessed internally it is moderated by the awarding body to ensure consistency between centres. Such moderation frequently changes the marks awarded for internally assessed work. That is outside the control of the school and is not covered by this procedure. Details of the appeals procedure for the relevant awarding body are available from the Examination Officer.

Appeals against Exam Board Results

After the release of results, enquiries about results can be raised by centre staff or candidates if there are reasonable grounds for believing an error has been made in marking.

Candidates can also request the return of scripts and ask staff to scrutinise them to ensure that the marking process has been correctly adhered to. If a result is queried, the Examinations Officer, teaching staff and head of centre will investigate the feasibility of asking for a re-mark. Where a cohort is involved the centre may bear the cost. In individual cases the candidate will meet the expense of a re-mark. Centre staff may also request scripts for investigation or for teaching purposes. For the latter, the consent of candidates must be obtained.

6. MONITORING

This policy is monitored by the Examinations Officer working with the Headteacher.

APPENDIX 1

OUTLINING STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES - GCSE CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT

Senior leadership team

- Accountable for the safe and secure conduct of controlled assessments. Ensure assessments comply with JCQ guidelines and awarding bodies' subject-specific instructions.

Heads of department

- Standardise internally the marking of all teachers involved in assessing an internally assessed component.
- Ensure that individual teachers understand their responsibilities with regard to controlled assessment.
- Ensure that individual teachers understand the requirements of the awarding body's specification and are familiar with the relevant teachers' notes, and any other subject specific instructions.
- Where appropriate, develop new assessment tasks or contextualize sample awarding body assessment tasks to meet local circumstances, in line with awarding body specifications and control requirements.
- Ensure that candidates' work is secure between assessment sessions (if more than one).
- Post-completion, retain candidates' work securely until the closing date for enquiries about results. In the event that an enquiry is submitted, retain candidates work securely until the outcome of the enquiry and any subsequent appeal has been conveyed to the centre
- Ensure that students and supervising teachers sign authentication forms on completion of an assessment.

Teaching staff

- Understand and comply with the general guidelines contained in the JCQ publication *Instructions for conducting controlled assessments*.
- Understand and comply with the awarding body specification for conducting controlled assessments, including any subject-specific instructions, teachers' notes or additional information on the awarding body's website.
- Supervise assessments (at the specified level of control). Undertake the tasks required under the regulations, only permitting assistance to students as the specification allows.

- Mark internally assessed components using the mark schemes provided by the awarding body. Submit marks through the Examinations office to the awarding body when required, keeping a record of the marks awarded.
- Ask the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) for any assistance required for the administration and management of access arrangements.

Examinations office staff

- Enter students for individual units, whether assessed by controlled assessment, external exam or on-screen test, before the deadline for final entries.
- Where confidential materials are directly received by the Examinations Office, to be responsible for receipt, safe storage and safe transmission, whether in CD or hard copy format.
- Map overall resource management requirements for the year. As part of this :
 - resolve clashes/ problems over the timing or operation of controlled assessments.
 - resolve issues arising from the need for particular facilities (rooms, IT networks, time out of school etc.)
 - ensure that all staff involved have a calendar of events

Special educational needs coordinator/additional learning support

- Ensure access arrangements have been applied for.
- Work with teaching staff to ensure requirements for support are met.

APPENDIX 2

For Candidates Completing the ECDL Automated Assessment provided by the BCS

- Candidates who are unhappy with any aspect of the assessment process should first discuss the problem with their ICT teacher or the Line Manager for Examinations (“Centre Manager”) within 5 working days of receiving their result.
- The candidate must make the reasons clear at this time.
- Assessments are undertaken using automated testing software which has been approved by the ECDL Foundation. In the event of a candidate raising a complaint the assessment report that will have been produced by the system will be fully discussed with the candidate.
- An action plan will be agreed and a further assessment date scheduled. In some circumstances the candidate may be offered a free re-test (e.g. if there had been hardware or software problems).
- If the candidate is unhappy with the decision the candidate must put their complaint in writing to the Centre Manager within 5 working days. The Centre Manager will fully review the complaint and attempt to find a solution.
- South Wilts Grammar School (“The Centre”) will keep a written record of each stage of the process with dates and outcomes.
- If the candidate is still unhappy then he/she has the right to appeal to the BCS Awarding Body. This may be done via the Centre Manager or direct to the BCS Quality Co-ordinator in writing. The address will be supplied on request.
- The BCS Representative will investigate the circumstances of the appeal and make a report to the appeals panel. In very exceptional cases, the appeals panel may request the Centre Manager possibly accompanied by the candidate, to attend a meeting of the panel to provide further explanation of the circumstances of the appeal.
- Appeals panel decisions will be given in writing to the Centre Manager and the candidate and are final.